

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SEOUL 00522 200830Z
ACTION HA-05

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 EB-08 PRS-01 IO-13 AID-05
AGRE-00 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01
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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8837

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 522

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EAID, KS
SUBJ: PL-480 AMENDMENT RELATING TO BASIC HUMAN NEEDS: DISCUSSION
WITH DEPUTY PRIMIN

REF: A) STATE 286264, B) STATE 2886009, C) SEOUL 241

1. AT PRIVATE LUNCHEON MEETING WITH DEPUTY PRIMIN NAM
DUCK WOO JANUARY 20, HE RAISED WITH ME PROPOSED AMENDMENT
TO PL-480 AGREEMENT. HE SAID THAT, DESPITE EFFORTS OF OUR
STAFFS TO WORK OUT PROBLEM, THERE STILL REMAINED SERIOUS
MISGIVINGS ON KOREAN SIDE. HE CITED TEXT OF LEGISLATION,
EXTRACT OF WHICH HE BROUGHT WITH HIM, LINKING BASIC HUMAN
NEEDS PROVISION WITH COUNTRIES WHO HAVE CONSISTENT PATTERN
OF GROSS VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS. AMENDEMENT PER SE WAS
NO PROBLEM TO ROKG BUT IT DOES NOT WISH TO BE IDENTIFIED
AS GROSS VIOLATER IN TERMS OF LEGISLATION AND AS PRESS
STORIES HAVE ALREADY MADE POINT. PARA 2. I POINTED OUT TO NAM
THAT WE WERE NOT SINGLING OUT KOREA AND THAT INCLUSION OF
AMENDMENT DID NOT IMPLY CONSISTENT PATTERN OF GROSS
VIOLATIONS. I ALSO POINTED OUT THAT PRESS STORY HAD BEEN
DISAVOWED FORMALLY.

3. NAM SAID HE HOPED TO SKIRT AROUND THIS ISSUE AND
ACCEPT AMENDMENT, BUT HE FEARED THAT PRESIDENT PARK
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WOULD NEVER ACCEPT IT WHEN FACED BY LANGUAGE OF
LEGISLATION. HE WAS ALSO GREATLY CONCERNED THAT
FAILURE TO SIGN PL-480 AGREEMENT WILL LEAVE DOOR OPEN
TO RENEWED CANADIAN AND AUSTRALIAN EFFORTS TO EXPAND
GREATLY THEIR AGRICULTURAL MARKETS IN KOREA, SINCE BOTH
COUNTRIES ARE OFFERING FAVORABLE TERMS.

4. NAM AND I ALSO DISCUSSED WAY OUT. SPECIFICALLY WE DISCUSSED POSSIBLE SIDE LETTER TO ME FROM HIM STATING THAT ROKG IN ACCEPTING THE AMENDMENT COULD DO SO ONLY ON THE BASIS OF RECOGNITION THAT IT WAS NOT FOLLOWING PATTERN OF GROSS VIOLATIONS, ETC., AS DEFINED IN LEGISLATION AND THAT SHOULD THIS LINKAGE BE ESTABLISHED IT WAS NOT PREPARED TO SIGN FUTURE PL-480 AGREEMENTS WITH THIS AMENDMENT. HE OFFERED TO TRY OUT THIS APPROACH WITHIN HIS GOVERNMENT AND ASKED ME TO DO LIKEWISE.

5. COMMENT: WHILE AT EARLY STAGES OF PL-480 NEGOTIATION WE HAD THOUGHT WE HAD SKIRTED HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE. ROKG SUBSEQUENT REVIEW OF LEGISLATIVE TERMS HAD RESULTED IN ITS RECONSIDERATION OF ISSUE. STIMULATED BY PRESS REPORTS, ROKG NOW UNWILLING TO ACCEPT ANY IMPLICATION OF QTE GROSS VIOLATIONS UNQTE DESPITE OUR REJOINDER THAT NEW AMENDMENT DOES NOT IMPLY THIS. WOULD APPRECIATE QUICK REACTION TO THE FORMULA SET FORTH ABOVE. I AM ALSO SERIOUSLY CONCERNED THAT BREAKDOWN IN PL-480 NEGOTIATIONS COULD HAVE SERIOUS ADVERSE IMPACT ON OUR VERY LARGE COMMERCIAL SALES OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS HERE AND WILL DO MY BEST TO AVOID THIS.
SNEIDER

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